

THE BYLAWS OF THE FACULTY

ARTICLE I: PREAMBLE

We, the Faculty of Virginia Commonwealth University, having been duly appointed by the Board of Visitors, and believing the purposes and objectives of any university can best be met through the combined effort and cooperative deliberation of its governing board, its administrators, and its faculty, do hereby establish these Bylaws to set forth the governing principles and procedures which will guide the Faculty of Virginia Commonwealth University in all its deliberations.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The purpose of the Faculty shall be the furtherance and dissemination of knowledge and professional skills through teaching, study, research, creativity, exhibition, performance, and provision of community engagement. An additional objective will be to help ensure through investigation, examination, comment, and recommendation the educational goals of the University are being realized by the policies and procedures employed in the University. The Faculty should have appropriate representation on University committees impacting faculty functions. The Faculty values collaboration, representative voice, transparency, accountability, and the alignment of Board, Administration, and Faculty responsibilities in pursuit of the University's mission. The Faculty affirm their commitment to shared governance and seeks to act in accordance with the ideals of shared governance set out by the VCU University Council and the President of the University.

ARTICLE III: VOTING MEMBERSHIP

The voting membership of the Faculty shall consist of the professors, associate professors, assistant professors, and instructors who are full-time employees of the University and who hold continuing appointments from the Board of Visitors as faculty members.

ARTICLE IV: FACULTY SENATE

Section 1. Purpose of the Faculty Senate

The Faculty Senate shall represent the Faculty in areas of its responsibilities and concerns:

- a. to help create, maintain, and protect a university-wide environment conducive to growth of scholarship, creativity, learning, teaching, research, service, and respect for human dignity and rights;
- b. to accept and share responsibility with administration and students in an effort to improve the stature and effectiveness of the University;
- c. to consider such policies, programs, and other matters as the administration, school faculties, student organizations, and individual members of the Faculty may propose;

- d. to develop and propose academic or educational policies which affect the University, the Faculty, or students;
- e. to express opinions on University affairs as the Faculty Senate deems appropriate and necessary.

Section 2. Composition of the Faculty Senate

- a. Members of the Faculty, as defined in Article III, who are not serving in administrative positions at or above the level of Department Chair are eligible to be members of the Senate.
- b. There are four categories of Senator:
 - (i) Elected Senators: are elected as specified below in Section 5, and have full debating and voting privileges.
 - (ii) Senators at Large: in those instances when it is necessary for their continued membership in the Faculty Senate, the officers and the outgoing President of the Faculty Senate shall be Senators at Large with full rights of membership and shall occupy specially created seats for one year.
 - (iii) Honorary Senators: in addition to the membership identified above, the President of the Faculty Senate will, as specified in the Standing Rules, appoint Honorary Senators with rights of discussion in Faculty Senate proceedings, but they do not have voting rights.
 - (iv) Alternate Senators: are elected as specified below in Section 5. They serve as substitutes, with full debating and voting privileges, for Elected Senators from their Unit when the latter are unable to attend a meeting. When not serving as substitutes, they have rights of discussion in Faculty Senate proceedings but do not have voting rights.
- c. The term "Voting Senator" shall refer to Elected Senators, Senators at Large, and Alternate Senators actively serving as substitutes.

Section 3. Terms of Office of Faculty Senators

- a. Elected Senators shall serve three-year terms beginning on August 16th following their election. Elected Senators who served a full three-year term shall not be eligible to serve again as Elected Senators for one year following the expiration of their term; however, such Senators are eligible for election as Alternate Senators. Alternate Senators who fill vacated Senate seats as directed in Section 5.b shall be eligible for immediate re-election at the end of the completed term.
- b. Honorary Senators are appointed annually and are eligible for reappointment without restriction.
- c. Alternate Senators shall serve one-year terms beginning on August 16th following their election. They are eligible to serve again as Alternate Senators or as Elected Senators following the completion of their term.

Section 4. Timing of Elections

- a. Unit elections of Elected Senators and Alternate Senators shall take place during the spring semester according to the procedures stated in Article IV, Section 5. The election process should be completed during the spring semester, but certainly no later than August 1st.
- b. The Faculty Senate is responsible for notifying in writing by March 15th the leadership of each Unit's faculty governance organization or Dean's Office of their responsibility for scheduling, conducting, and overseeing the election of Elected Senators and Alternate Senators from that Unit.

Section 5. Method of Elections

- a. Elected Senators: Elected Senators must be voting members of the Faculty as defined in Article IV, Section 2.a. The number of Senators to be elected by each Unit shall be in accordance with the *Standing Rules of the Faculty Senate*.
- b. Alternate Senators: Alternate Senators must be voting members of the Faculty as defined in Article IV, Section 2.a. The number of Alternate Senators to be elected by each Unit shall be in accordance with the *Standing Rules of the Faculty Senate*.
 - (i) Alternate Senators will be designated by the Unit as First Alternate, Second Alternate, Third Alternate, etc. based upon election results with the First Alternate receiving the most votes, the Second Alternate receiving the second most votes, and so forth.
 - (ii) If an Elected Senator's seat becomes vacant before the expiration of his/her term, the seat shall be filled for the remainder of the term by the highest designated Alternate Senator elected by that Elected Senator's Unit. The designated Alternate Senator will complete the full term of the replaced Elected Senator.
 - (iii) Upon notification by the Faculty Senate that a Unit's pool of Alternate Senators is diminished, the Dean of that Unit shall expeditiously direct the selection of replacement Alternate Senators in accordance with the procedures of that Unit.
- c. Nominations and Elections: Nominations of faculty to serve as Elected Senators and as Alternate Senators shall be made following the Unit's nominating procedures and in accordance with the following:
 - (i) The Unit Nominating Committee shall be composed of faculty eligible to vote as defined in Article III.
 - (ii) The Unit Nominating Committee shall solicit nominations throughout its Unit or from an open meeting of the Unit to which all members of a Unit's faculty have been invited at least two weeks in advance and at which nominations have been indicated to be an agenda item. The Nominating Committee itself may add nominations.

- (iii) The Unit Nominating Committee should notify potential nominees of the usual day and time of the Faculty Senate meetings and that Elected Senators are expected to represent their Unit at these monthly meetings from September through May.
- (iv) In accordance to the Unit's procedure for conducting elections, a secret ballot with the names of all the nominees who have accepted their nominations shall be distributed to all faculty eligible to vote as defined in Article III. Nominees are elected to open positions in descending order of votes received.
- (v) Units may have an election for Alternate Senators separately from the election for Elected Senators, or they may combine the election of Elected Senators and Alternate Senators. If the latter, after all open Elected Senator positions have been filled, nominees are elected to open Alternate Senator positions in descending order of votes received.
- (vi) The election results should be conveyed to the Faculty Senate within two weeks of the election, but certainly by August 15th.

Section 6. Meetings of the Faculty Senate

- a. Regular meetings shall be held monthly during the academic year (September through May), except that either the December or the January meeting may be omitted. The President of the Faculty Senate may call special meetings as needed.
- b. A quorum exists whenever more than 50% of the Voting Senators are present, and once in existence, continues to exist as long as at least 25% of the Voting Senators are present. Voting Senators are defined in Article IV. Section 2.c.
- c. Faculty members who are eligible for election to the Faculty Senate may attend its regular and special meetings without vote. Such members may participate in Faculty Senate discussion on a given agenda item only if they have received advance permission from the President of the Faculty Senate to speak on that item or if the President of the Faculty Senate requests that they provide information to the Faculty Senate on a specific issue.
- d. Faculty Senate meetings may be called at the discretion of the President of the Faculty Senate or upon written request of ten Voting Senators to the President of the Faculty Senate.

Section 7. Standing Rules of the Faculty Senate

- a. The Faculty Senate shall operate in accordance with the *Standing Rules of the Faculty Senate*.
- b. These rules may be amended or rescinded by a majority vote of the Faculty Senate if advance notice is given at the previous Faculty Senate meeting. If no such advance notice has been given, the *Standing Rules of the Faculty Senate* may be amended or rescinded by a two-thirds vote.

ARTICLE V: MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

Section 1. The President of Faculty Senate shall formally request that the President of the University convene the Faculty for a General Faculty Meeting annually for the purpose of reporting on the state of the University and receiving questions from the Faculty. This request shall be conveyed each year by the President of the Faculty Senate by October 1st.

Section 2. The President of the Faculty Senate shall convene a meeting of the General Faculty upon the written petition of 25 or more members of the Faculty.

Section 3. Parliamentary authority: *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*, shall be the authority on all questions of parliamentary procedure not covered by the *Bylaws of the Faculty*.

ARTICLE VI: SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

The Faculty of each Unit of the University shall organize and establish in assembly, rules, and procedures for faculty participation in the governance of the Unit.

ARTICLE VII: REVIEW AND REVISION OF THE BYLAWS

Section 1. The Faculty Senate shall review and, if appropriate, propose revisions to the *Bylaws of the Faculty* every five years or as deemed appropriate by the Faculty Senate.

Section 2. On approval by its members, the Faculty Senate shall provide the proposed revised Bylaws of the Faculty to the faculty for approval. Two weeks' notice of proposed revisions to the Bylaws of the Faculty must be provided to the Faculty before the votes are tallied.

Section 3. Revisions to the *Bylaws of the Faculty* shall be approved by two-thirds of those voting. Voting membership is defined in Article III.

Section 4. History

- a. The original *Bylaws of the Faculty* were ratified by a vote of the entire VCU Faculty in February 1970 .
- b. The original *Bylaws of the Faculty* were approved by the University Assembly and were transmitted to the Board of Visitors by the incumbent president, Dr. Warren E. Brandt .
- c. The original *Bylaws of the Faculty* were approved unanimously by the Board of Visitors on July 23, 1970 including "that the Faculty Senate be established and recognized to represent the faculty in the areas of (its) responsibilities and concerns."
- d. Revised Bylaws of the Faculty were approved by the Faculty on March 12, 2004, and by the Board of Visitors on May 21, 2004.
- e. These revised Bylaws of the Faculty were last approved by the Faculty on April 3, 2018, and by the Board of Visitors on May 11, 2018.